

News Release

King's Lynn, Norfolk, UK, Friday, December 18, 2009

Volunteers are Vital - could YOU be one?

The Norfolk Hospice, Tapping House needs you!

Have you ever considered being a volunteer and have you wondered about what volunteering in a Hospice might be like? Do you know about Hospice care and what it does? Are you aware that volunteers contribute a vast amount of time and service to Hospices across the United Kingdom and most Hospice professionals consider that their services would not have the consistently high reputation for quality of care if they did not have the volunteer workforce from their communities?

Well, now is the time to find out more by visiting the Norfolk Hospice Tapping House, which is to host open evenings to promote the current and future volunteering roles.

Over the past six months, the Hospice has been reviewing the roles that volunteers play in delivering its services to the people of West Norfolk and the Fens.

John Hunt, Director of Care Services, who has led the review and development of new roles said, "The Hospice is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. Our founder, Dr Hugh Ford started the service with a core of volunteers, who were trained and supported to add quality to the professional care and to offer additional care and companionship to patients and their families. We currently have over 150 volunteers offering their time to support us in the care, fundraising, retail and administrative aspects of our Hospice service. All are precious to us"

Tom Fitzalan Howard, Director of Support Services at the Norfolk Hospice Tapping House, whose role includes managing the volunteer service, commented that, "People feel that they have to commit to large amounts of time to become a volunteer, but for us, a small number of hours each month is a gift and we welcome anyone, of any age, who feels that they wish to be part of the Hospice 'family'. We regard volunteers as part of our team and respect their skills and life experiences. We have been so lucky to have many volunteers who have been part of the Hospice for many years. More recently, we have been fortunate to see a growing interest in volunteering from young people, many of whom lead busy lives, but wish to invest some of their time in their local Hospice".

Louise Clark, Sister in the Day & Home Care Services, works with a number of volunteers as part of her care team each day; "The volunteers are an integral part of our workforce and support patients in so many direct and indirect ways; from the care that they take in preparing and decorating the dining table for lunch, to the simple hand massage that offers comfort and the sharing of a joke; yes, there is much laughter here; all this combines to add to the quality of life that matters so much to us."

John Hunt said that the aim of the open evenings was to inform people about the Hospice, volunteering and the recruitment and training for specific roles; including Bereavement Support and Therapy Support volunteers; "We are very excited about the new roles, which will make a real contribution to the development of our services. But we also want to encourage as many people as possible to consider joining us in helping and supporting people at a significant time in their lives; that's the reward for us all, whether in a paid or volunteer post, that's why we're here and we want you with us!"

As one Hospice volunteer said recently, "It's a wonderful place, which is needed in the local community. It fills my 'lonely time' and I meet a lot of wonderful people."

If you would like to know more about volunteering for the Hospice and/or the open information evenings, please contact John Hunt or Tom Fitzalan Howard on 01485 543163.